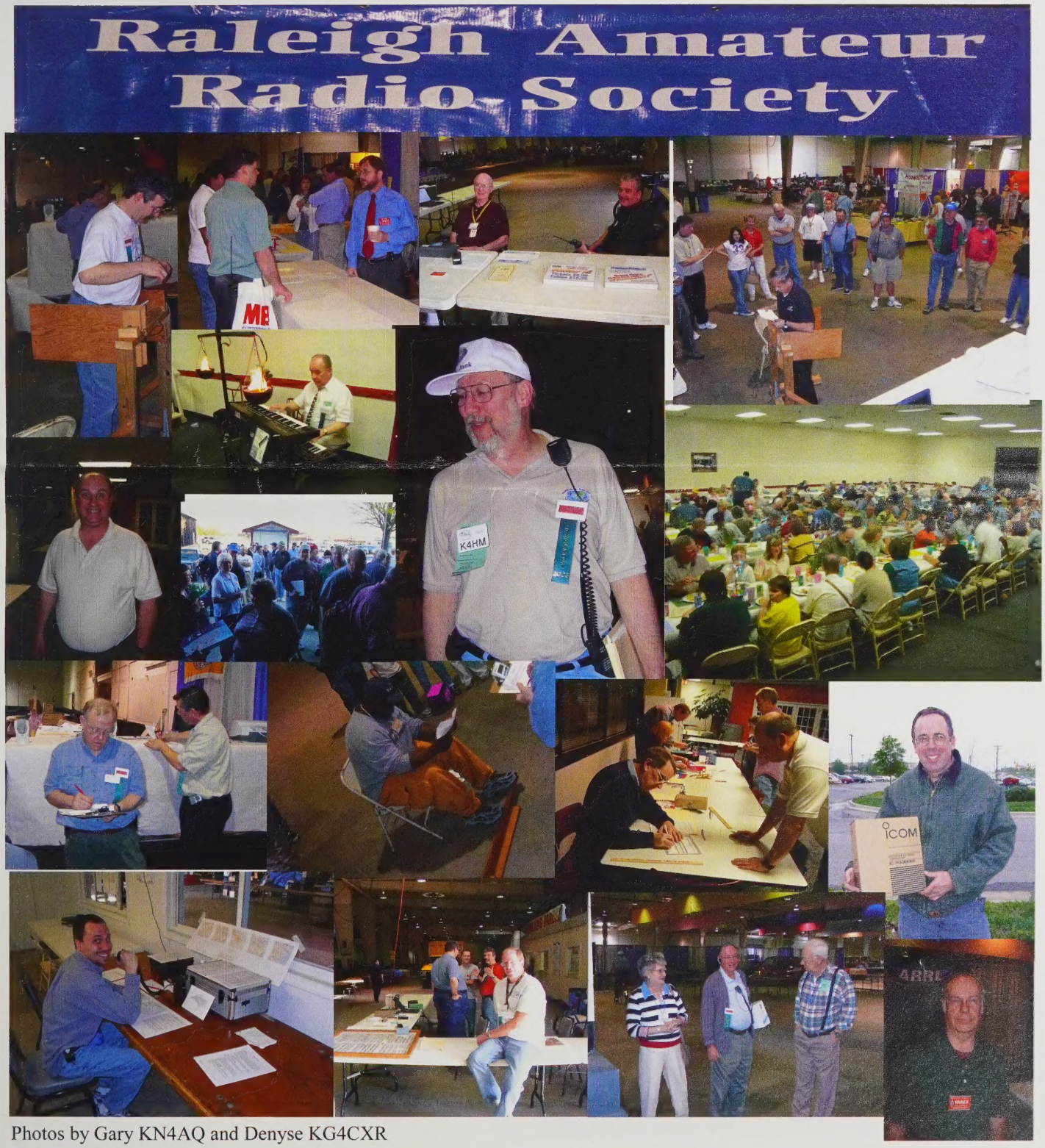
the RARS Exciter

Raleigh Amateur Radio Society

RARS

Worldwide Friendship

June, 2003 Number 387



Photos by Gary KN4AQ and Denyse KG4CXR

The Exciter

The ***Exciter*** is the monthly newsletter of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society. It is available in both printed and electronic form. The printed version is mailed to members just before each club meeting. The electronic form, in Adobe Acrobat PDF format, is e-mailed about a week earlier.

We solicit both articles and advertising. The deadline for submissions is first Friday of the month or Friday after the monthly meeting. Contact the Editor.

The views contained in the Exciter are those of the individual authors, and are not necessarily the views of the Editor, or the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society.

The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society

The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society, Inc. (RARS) was founded in 1969 and continues to serve and support the Amateur Radio community in the greater Triangle area. In 1999, we incorporated a new RARS, and obtained 501(c)(3) Non-Profit tax status.

The objectives of the club are to promote worldwide friend-ship through Amateur Radio; to be of public service by providing radio communications in times of disaster, emergency, or civic need; to educate members in radio technique; and to provide training classes to assist in obtaining Amateur Radio licenses.

Anyone interested in Amateur Radio is eligible to apply for membership. Dues for regular licensed amateurs are $18.00 per year (from July 1 through June 30). Additional immediate family members pay $5.00 each per year. Dues for licensed amateurs older than 59 or younger than 16 are $12.00 per year. Dues for non-licensed Associate members are $9.00 per year.

Applications for membership may be obtained from the treasurer, or the RARS web site (www.rars.org).

SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB

OFFICERS

President: **Bernard Blackmon W4BRB**
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Vice-President: **Andy Peterson NI4S**
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INFO
RARS Repeaters in Raleigh:
145.13
146.64
224.64
444.525 (88.5 PL)

WEB SITE http://www.rars.org

NEXT RARS MEETING:
June 3, 2003
SEVERE WEATHER
Jeff Orrock

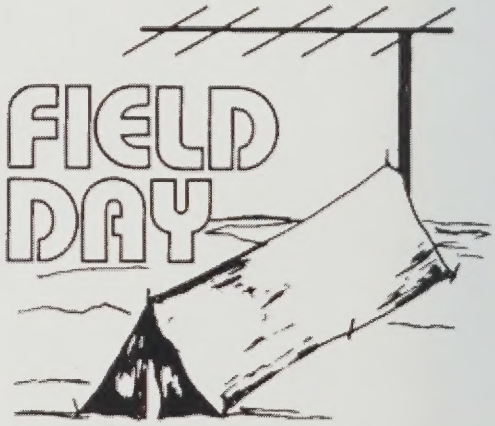
RALEIGH AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY MEETINGS

Date: Every first Tues of the Month

Location: Forest Hills Baptist Church, at Dixie Trail and Clark Avenue, in Raleigh

Time: 7:30pm, Folks start showing up a bit before 7 to chat, brag and eat donuts.

VE TESTING: The RARS VEs will accept walk-in testing which is on even months except April and December. Please bring a photo ID, your original current license if you have one, and any CSCEs you need for credit.. Check into the 8:00 pm net every night on the 146.64 repeater or www.rars.org for information.



JUNE 28-29,2003
NEAL N4HAF Field Day Chairman

NEWS FROM ARRL NC SECTION MANAGER

Bernie Nobles WA4MOK of Winterville will became the new NC ARRL Section Emergency Coordinator (SEC), effective April 12th, 2003. Nobles was appointed by NC Section Manager John Covington W4CC after current SEC Dave Fleming KE4JHJ of Winston-Salem decided to step down after four years of service.

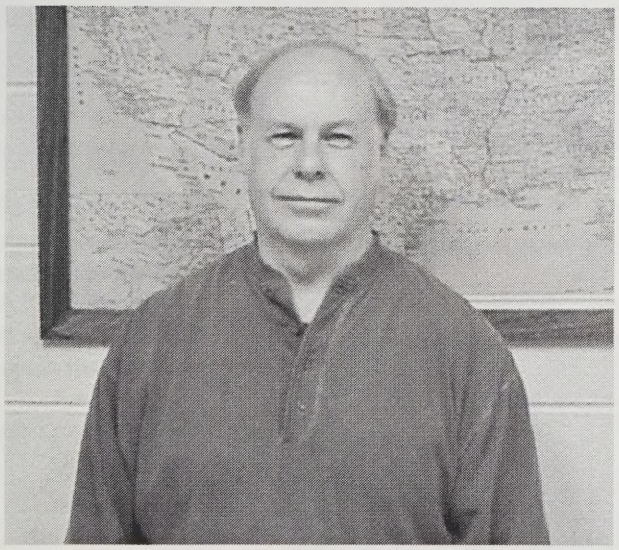
The SEC is appointed to take care of all matters pertaining to emergency communications and the Amateur Radio Emergency Service in the section. The SEC generally has a statewide presence on the Tar Heel Net, nightly at 7:30 on 3923 kHz (the Tar Heel net is the official Section HF ARES net).

"I'm very pleased to be able to appoint a well-qualified person to this position," Covington said. "Bernie has served us well as the Eastern Branch Assistant SEC for four years, and served as a District EC for four years before that. He will do an outstanding job as SEC." Nobles was also Pitt County EC.

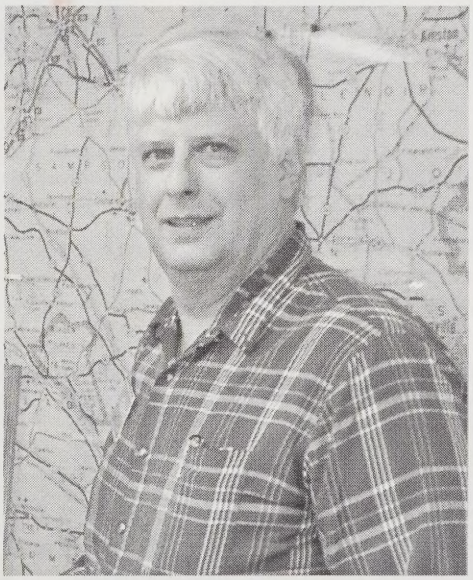
Bernie Nobles was first licensed in 1960. He is a past president of the Brightleaf Amateur Radio Club in Greenville (seven times), and chaired the club's Field Day effort at least 16 times, according to the club's newsletter, the Ham Chatter. Editor Dave Langley W4YDY adds that recently Nobles has been actively elmering new hams in the BARC club, running sessions on operating, setting up a station, emergency operations, antennas, demos, etc. Professionally, he is a site supervisor for the UNC Public Television system, and spends a lot of time several thousand feet in the air on towers around the state.

Outgoing SEC Dave Fleming served during two challenging disasters for ARES - Hurricane Floyd in 1999 and the December 2002 ice storms, and has been involved in development of the recently completed NC RACES Guidelines. "Dave will become the Area 9 District EC, which has been a difficult position to fill. I'm glad Dave is remaining a part of the team, he has been a big contributor to ARES in many ways," Covington said.

NC Section leadership wish to thank both Dave Fleming and Bernie Nobles for their participation in ARES
(Photos by Gary KN4AQ)

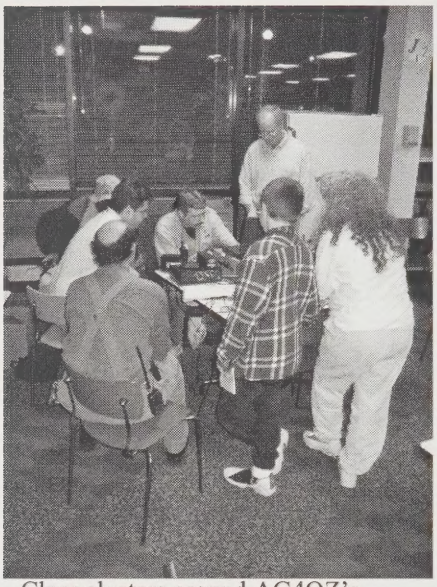


Bernie Nobles WA4MOK, new NC Sectional SEC



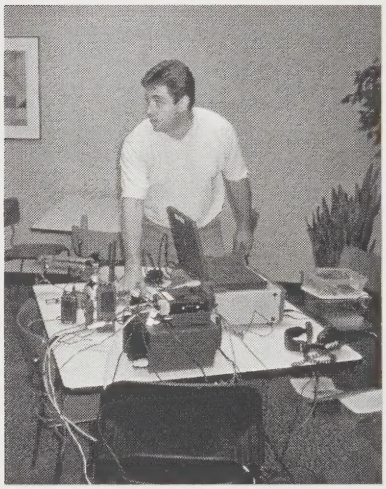
David Fleming KE4JHJ out-going SEC

APRIL RARS CLASS FOR NEW HAMS



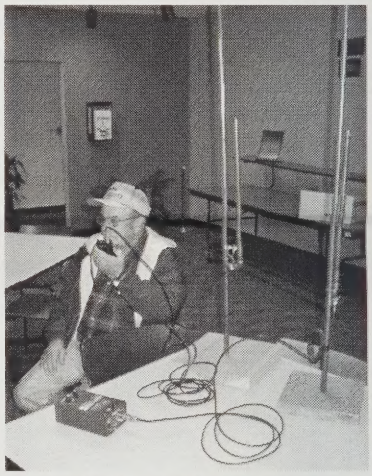
Class clusters around AG4QZ's station as AC4ZO operates CW

Jeff Wittich AC4ZO and Maury Cupit AG4OZ talk ham radio. In the vice is a miniature CW transceiver Maury built.

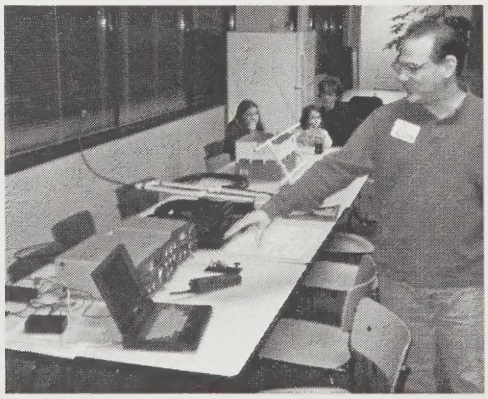


AG4QZ Maury Cupitt (RARS Class of 2002 shows the class "stuff"

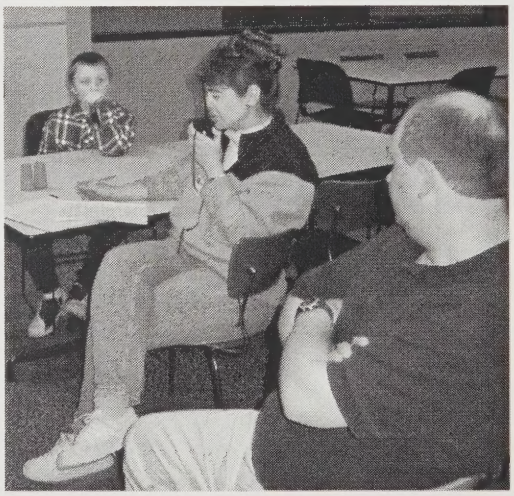
Israel Pattison N4ZVU shows the interface that will let Camille Durfee talk on the radio using her computer.



Kerrell Watts W4KGL checks into Mary's net using his home-brew copper J-Pole antenna



KE4DRN Jim Marolda shows his HF equipment and homebrew antennas-in the background are his wife and daughters



Mary Holtschneider KG4OQA runs the RARS 8 pm net while the class looks on

Photos by Gary KN4AQ

Minutes of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society Board Meeting March 18, 2003

Members present: W4BRB, KN4AQ, K4HF, K4HM, AB4OZ, NI4S, KG4CXR, K1RCB, KE4PAX, and guest K1MRB.

The meeting was called to order by President Bernard Blackmon W4BRB at 7:30pm.

The February Board Meeting minutes were approved, on motion by K4HM seconded by K4HF.

Standing Committees:

VP (NI4S): The April meeting will be an overview of the cable TV system, by Mark Clark from Time Warner Cable. May meeting topic is TBD.

FM (W4BRB): Some programming issues with controller & tone board are being worked. Danny Musten has been contacted for help with this.

Exciter (KG4CXR): Celebrating one year of Exciters in May. Will shift the May Exciter slightly later due to the meeting reschedule, and to be able to include hamfest info.

Net Manager (KG4OQA via W4BRB): Nets progressing well. Wednesday night NCS has resigned, and two other operators are assisting. Still looking for help with ARRL News Hour.

Member services (KG4CXR): No report.

Hamfest (K4HM): Ticket sales progressing well. Booths are looking better than expected. Meeting Monday 3/24 with Hamfest Committee. AC4ZO reports that table sales are also going well.

Field Day (N4HAF via W4BRB): Neal starting to bring things together – will make announcement at next club meeting.

Public Information (KN4AQ): The latest QST has a piece about public information, and used some photos and copy about RARS Field Day.

Education (KN4AQ): Class doing well, 7 students. Tune In The World will likely be somewhat scaled-down. Neal N4HAF will be putting together a 5wpm code class starting April 21.

Public Service (K1RCB): Odyssey of The Mind event went well. Some positive comments received from organizers. Autism Society has contacted us about their event. MS Society events (Walk & MS-150) are on the schedule.

ARRL (K4HF): ARRL has some funds for reimbursement of ARECC courses and some other education.

Nominating Committee: No report.

W4DW/W4RNC Trustee: No report.

Treasurer (KE4PAX): There are 294 members.

Unfinished Business

ARES Equipment – John KG4HDT via KN4AQ, says that there have been some delays with the State, but he should have something to present by the next board meeting.

Reminder to spread the word about the May meeting being moved to the 2nd Tuesday (May 13).

New Business

Budget Preparation (W4BRB): Bernard asked all members present to begin thinking about the draft budget which will be discussed at the next meeting.

Bob K1RCB showed a sample of some RARS banners, as well as "car flags" that can be made up for reasonable prices.

Bob also mentioned he'd been in contact with RT Systems, makers of radio programming software and cables regarding the club discount that had been offered previously. He will see if they'd like to have any presence at the hamfest.

Meeting was adjourned on motion by K1RCB at 8:46pm.

The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society is now accepting credit card payments online for new members and membership renewals. You can join or renew your membership completely online using a secure credit card payment process.

See the RARS website www.rars.org for more information to sign up for RARS membership or renew for 1, 2 or 3 years

Thanks for another great RARSFest.

April 13th marked the 31st annual Raleigh Amateur Radio Society hamfest. Let me start by saying thanks to all our members who gave of their time to help make this year's hamfest a success. Without membership support we could not possibly put on a hamfest the size of RARSFest. Every one of you who came out to work can be proud of the job you did. You are greatly appreciated.

Again this year we need to give a big Thank You to Doug and Doug – two guys who travel to Raleigh from the northern and southern reaches of the country to put in long hours in support of our hamfest. Doug Sweet comes up from Melbourne FL and Doug Wittich comes from Baltimore, MD. Now if we can just convince them to bring some of the local hams along with them next year . . . . . .

I also want to thank all those great crew chiefs who started working way back in the fall of last year planning this year's hamfest, then pulled the volunteers together into the various teams that got the work done. Jeff Wittich and Chuck Littlewood get started working months before the hamfest, Jeff with pre-registration for the flea market and Chuck (Mr. Hamfest) working with the NC Fairgrounds office, and the dealer booth sales and layout. Woody Winstead prepared and printed the programs again this year and Tim Nicholson made pre-registration much easier this year by setting up a Pay-Pal payment page on the RARSFest web page. On the weekend of the hamfest Bernard Blackmon and Doug Sweet were the first on the scene spending Friday morning working with the folks bringing in the tables, chairs, booths, etc. Then on Saturday they spent the day satisfying last minute requests for additional tables, different configurations, power, etc. from the dealers and the vendors.

Then there's the social on Saturday evening – Mary Jo Littlewood did her usual outstanding job, which also starts weeks before the hamfest contacting members for covered dishes, purchasing the decorations, and ordering the meat for the feast. Andy Peterson took over the Admissions crew this year, second in size only to the Security crew, which was managed again this year by Vince Heffron. Joe Zobkiw took over talk-in and Gary Pearce was once again at the helm of the stage. (You may have noticed a retiree wearing pink roller skates hanging around the stage also). The new chief VE team of Joe and Liz White handled a larger than expected test session on Sunday morning while Glen Clary and Greg Seamster juggled the books. The "Dynamic Duo", Bob Breyer and Max Bloodworth, were joined this year by Larry Holt. These Three Musketeers managed the sale of membership equipment at the RARS Table and Bob Condor did a bang up QBH job at the helm of the contests this year. Dave Thomas' "Dumpster Diver" crew took out the trash when the show was all closed down and finally Bernard and Doug – the first to arrive on Friday – made sure all the rented equipment was neatly stacked for pickup on Monday morning, and helped the last few dealers pack up and get out late Sunday evening.

I'm sure I missed some others who put in long hours – and there isn't enough room to say the deserved kind words for all the members who pitched in to work the 2-hour shifts on Saturday and Sunday. As you can see, there is a lot more to the hamfest than is seen by the folks attending the show. Once again, sincere thanks to all the members who made it happen again this year.

This year's hamfest was remarkably problem free. Every vendor I talked to praised the hamfest and the staff. Several vendors were absent this year for health reasons, but most of them plan to be back next year. We also picked up a few new large vendors who plan to return next year. Attendance was down slightly this year, back on the same decline that hamfests generally have been experiencing over the last decade. Somehow we managed a slight growth last year. If we don't have another war going on next year maybe we can regain that growing spurt.

The RARSFest staff met before the end of April to capture ideas and lessons learned in preparation for the 32nd RARSFest. Now we start a 4-month slack period until the work picks up in earnest this fall. If you would like to take a more active role in the preparations for RARSFest 2004 please contact me. Phone: 919-577-1254 or K4HM@arrl.net

73,
Hank – K4HM

RARS NEW MEMBERS

April 2003

We would like to welcome our new members to RARS. Thank you for considering us for your amateur radio club.

Ken AB4RQ Ken AC4RD
Durb KC4MID

NET REPORTS FOR April, 2003

- 8:00PM DAILY: RARS Evening Net
- 9:00PM MON: SWL SIG
- 8:30PM SAT : Tech & Traders net

Total Net Activity:
Minutes: 842
Check-Ins: 463 in 33 Sessions
Traffic : 35 brought 24 passed

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ANTENNA FOR HAND-HELDS

By Max KO4TV

There was some discussion recently on the 146.64 Repeater concerning the "Possum Tail" antenna for hand-helds, and most of the newer Hams (and quite a few of the older ones) had never heard of it. It was sold in the past under the name of "Tiger Tail" by several sources for as much as $7.95, (plus shipping, of course), and performed pretty much as claimed. However, many of the purchasers were not too pleasantly surprised when they opened their package and found only a short piece of wire with a clip on one end. In spite of their initial disappointment, they were usually well pleased with the performance, if not the price. So just what is a "Possum Tail" and why the name? We all know that Tigers are somewhat scarce in the Carolinas, but Possums are plentiful, so why not use the name of a critter most of us are familiar with? A few years ago I built a "Possum Tail" and made several comparison checks against other antennas. The following results were obtained with a home brew field strength meter and a 2 watt hand-held, mounted in a fixed location, far-field test setup:

Antenna	Field Strength relative reading
2 element Quad	100+
"Beer can" J-Pole	100+
Quarter wave whip	100+
" " " with Possum Tail	110
7 inch "Rubber Duck	30
" " " with Possum Tail	80
4 inch " "	5
" " " with Possum Tail	15

While these readings are all relative, it is obvious that the "Possum Tail" has much to offer for little or no investment. So how do we go about making one of these "Miracle Antennas"? Simply take a 19 inch piece of small, flexible wire, either insulated or bare, and fasten it to the metal ground shell of the antenna fitting on your hand-held. You can make a metal clip by bending a paper clip to snap over your antenna ground shell and soldering the wire to it, or for a more permanent installation, solder the wire directly to the BNC or SMA fitting on your antenna. Since most of these fittings are chrome-plated brass, it is wise to scrape or file a little of the plating off to insure a good solder joint. When using hand-held, allow the wire to droop straight down. This provides the "missing" ground element of your antenna, turning your existing antenna into a center fed half-wave doublet. Try it-You'll like it!

LOCAL NETS

Daily:
RARS 8:00 net on 146.64
JARS 8:30 on 147.27
PCTN 9:00 on 146.88
Tar Heel Net (statewide ARES Net) 7:30 PM on 3.923 LSB

Monday thru Friday
Possum Trot Net - 6:05 to 7:15 AM on 147.255
7:15 to 7:45 AM on 147.075 (Pittsboro)

Monday:
RARS/Tarheel SWL/Scanner Net - 9:00 PM on 146.64

Tuesday:
TEARA - 8:30 PM on 147.39 (88.5) (except 3rd Tue meeting night)
SKYWARN Info Net - 9:15 PM on 146.88

Wednesday:
JARS Trader Net - 9:00 on 147.27
CCHH Public Service Net - 9:15 PM on 147.015 (88.5)
Raleigh Ragchew Net - 9:30 PM on 145.19 (156.7)

Thursday:
Durham FM Assn - 7 PM on 147.225
Wake County ARES - 9:15 PM on 146.88

Friday:
no additional nets

Saturday:
NC six meter SSB NET - 8 AM on 50.200 USB
(called by KD4MYE from Youngsville, NC)
Orange County ARES net - 9:30 AM on 442.15 (131.8)
RARS Tech/Trader Net - 8:30 PM on 146.64
IRLP Skywarn net 8:00pm on 146.775 (88.5) or 441.725 (100.0)

Sunday:
RARS News Hour - 8:30 PM on 146.64
Mid Atlantic Two Meter SSB Net - 8:30 PM on 144.220 MHz USB
(called by N1GMV from Zebulon, NC)
Durham County ARES - 9:00 PM on 145.45

Is there a net missing? Please contact Nick
http://www.3rdtech.com/nick/ham/rtp/hamnet.htm

General Meeting May 13

Minutes of the RARS General Membership Meeting, Tues, 5/13/03

Meeting was called to order by President Bernard Blackmon W4BRB. There was one visitor Kevin Otte N8VNR

Treasurer's Report (KE4PAX) - There are 300 members It's time for membership renewals. You can renew your membership online.

Field Day (N4HAF) - Field Day is scheduled for Sat 6/28 (set up on Fri 6/27). There will be a catered BBQ dinner.

Hamfest (K4HM) - Drawing for the worker incentive prize is postponed til next general meeting because all the workers' names have not been submitted as yet.

Hurricane Preparedness Fair (KN4AQ) - Scheduled for Sat 6/21 at the Lowe's on Glenwood Ave. Looking for someone to coordinate the ham portion of the event.

Program on HF Digital Modes (PSK31) by Tim W4TME.

Door Prizes were won by: AC4RD, AB4OZ, KD4ISC, KG4OQA, K4PSP, KE4PAX, K4DAM, K4HM, W4TIM, KF4UQZ.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

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GRAHAM REPEATER ASSN. LINK SYSTEM WELCOMES RARS MEMBERS

By Roger AC4U

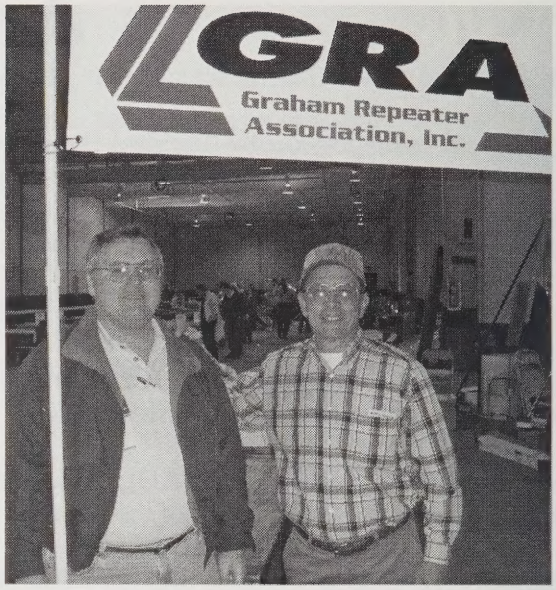
The Graham Repeater Association, Inc. (GRA) consist of eleven repeaters located in five different counties from Wake to Guilford. Nets, ragchewing and emergency use of these open repeaters are welcomed and encouraged. GRA has five 440 machines linked 24/7 with coverage throughout the heart of the Piedmont. Maintenance expenses are $2,000 each year. GRA asks the amateur radio community for support. Typical contribution is $20/25 a year. Rasfest 2003 GRA booth was very active and a successful fundraising event. GRA wishes to take this opportunity to say "Thank you" to all contributors. For additional information email Graham Repeater @aol.com. Roger Jefferson, AC4U.

Graham Repeater Association

53.410- PL 107.2	Efland *
147.375+ PL 114.8	Graham *
147.180+ PL 156.7	Efland *
146.760- PL 156.7	Greensboro
145.190- PL 156.7	Raleigh *
224.660- PL 107.2	Efland *
442.050+ PL 107.2	Efland * this is linked repeater
443.725+ PL 156.7	Graham * this is linked repeater
444.225+ PL 146.2	Greensboro *
443.425+ PL 156.7	RTP *
444.825+ PL 146.2	Raleigh *

Machines can be accessed without tone by entering 75. They will automatically reactivate PL requirement after post activity timer of 12 seconds.

Want to know more about area repeaters? Check the extensive list on the RARS web site. Push the "Repeaters" link on the home page www.rars.org.



Roger AC4U & Jim N4CAD

IN-THE-LOOP
RALEIGH RAGCHEW NET

Every Wednesday 9:30 145.19

Durham Hamfest finds new date, location

Gary Pearce KN4AQ

The Durham FM Association held their 29th Annual DUR-HAM-FEST in a new location and on a new date, May 10th, this year. The old location, the lower level of the parking deck at Durham's South Square Mall, has seen the wrecking ball as that mall was closed earlier this year. So the fest moved to the National Guard Armory on the north side of town.

The site offered a spacious indoor flea-market area, and a parking lot for tailgating. I'd say it was generally more comfortable than the old location. If it had rained, the outdoor tailgating would have been a wash-out, but indoors would have been fine. The actual weather was sunny and hot, in the low 90's, making the non-air-conditioned building pretty warm, but not impossibly so. Future dates should see more seasonal temperatures.

Many people estimated that the crowd was "down." It was never crowded. One major vendor told me that his sales were way down from last year. That's to be expected when you change dates and locations, especially these days when hamfest attendance is falling across the board. But as word gets out that DFMA has found a good home, nicer than their old one, the fest should get back on track.

Mary KG4OQA is the winner of $100. Mary, what did you buy?

Tailgating in fine weather at the Durham Hamfest.

The Central Carolina Skywarn Net Meets Tuesdays at 9:15 PM on 146.88 Repeater

SKYWARN

Remember to give damage reports AFTER the storms as well as DURING the storms.

Skywarn Class held In Fuquay-Varina on April 14, 2003. Jeff Orrock taught the class about lightning. Listen to the Skywarn net on Tuesdays nights 9:15pm 146.88 for more classes.

Photo by Denyse KG4CXR

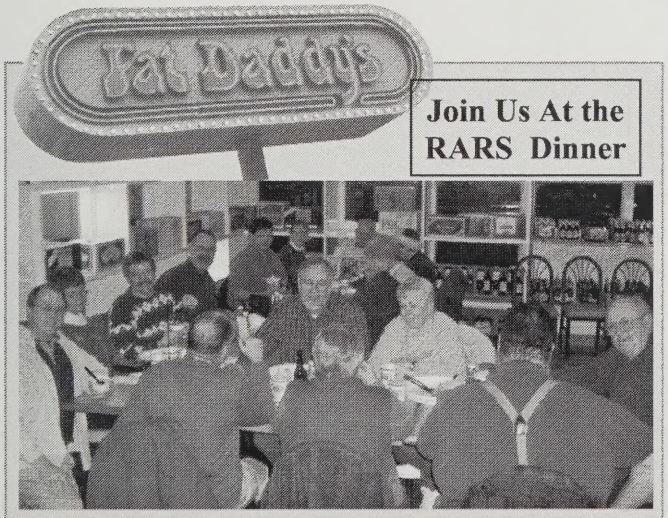
SKYWARN MONTHLY DINNER MEETING
By Denyse KG4CXR AEC Skywarn Wake County

IRLP Skywarn net every Saturday at 7:00 pm, 441.725 + (88.5 PL tone) or 146.775—(PL tone 88.5) Skywarn information and comments are given from around the world.

April Skywarn dinner was held in Wake Forest. May dinner meeting has been cancelled because of Memorial Day weekend. Please listen to the Tuesday night Skywarn net for announcements of upcoming dinners.

Thank you for all the reports during the Skywarn activation the past few weeks. It's very important to report what the National Weather Station requests. Hams in Kansas City, KS saved several lives with reports of a twister. The National Weather Service was able to give out warnings in time for people to take cover.

Photo by David KF4VXJ



Join Us At the RARS Dinner

On 4th Tuesday, 6:30 pm at Fat Daddy's on Glenwood Ave.

HAMFEST CALENDAR

June 7	**Winston-Salem, NC**
July 12	**Salisbury, NC**
July 19	**Cary, NC**
July 26	**Waynesville, NC**
August 2	**Roanoke, VA ***
August 9	**Fayetteville, NC ***
August 30-31	**Shelby, NC**

*** is not be confirmed**

Courtesy of the SERA Repeater Journal

SOUTHEASTERN REPEATER ASSOCIATION sera MEMBER

The RARS
Exciter
May, 2003

Raleigh Amateur Radio Society, Inc
PO Box 17124
Raleigh, North Carolina 27619

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RALEIGH, NC
PERMIT NO. 2130

RARSfest 2003: Tables of goodies and lots of action at the North Carolina State Fairgrounds. Plans are already started for next year's Hamfest which is April 4, 2003. Mark your calendar!

Photo by Denyse KG4CXR

Photo by Gary KN4AQ